



TALKING POINTS: Earmark Reform

OUR PRINCIPLE: *We believe taxpayers' money should be spent wisely and transparently. All earmark requests should be clearly disclosed and subject to an up-or-down vote of the House.*

To the extent that Democrats promised reforms to the earmark process, we intend to hold them accountable.

Republicans support earmark reform. House Republicans in September 2006 passed earmark reform, despite opposition from Pelosi and House Democrats.

Democrats cannot have it both ways on earmark reform. The Republican House in September 2006 adopted earmark reforms requiring all earmark sponsors be identified. Pelosi and other Democrat leaders led the opposition to this reform, calling it "a sham." They called it "a fraud" and "a political gimmick."

- Only days after the midterm elections, *USA Today* reported Pelosi had found religion on the issue: "[Pelosi's] first agenda item after being elected House Speaker will be a vote to require sponsors of earmarks to be identified." (*USA Today*, 11/13/06) Sound familiar?
- Days later, *The New York Times* reported House Democrats may press for earmark rules that limit disclosure requirements to "district-specific" earmarks, by all accounts a scaled-down reform from what Republicans passed in September 2006.

Democrats break campaign promises on earmark reform. In backtracking on earmark reform, Democrats have broken one of their signature campaign promises.

- Pelosi's hometown paper: "The current Democratic plan calls for the disclosure of only 'district-only' earmarks. That is a sham reform, which would be limited to earmarks the lawmakers are likely to be bragging about." (*SF Chronicle*, 11/27/06)
- *Time*: "...Pelosi's promised transparency on earmarks is a step down from Democratic campaign vows to ban earmarks sponsored by a lawmaker if the spending benefits the member, his or her spouse, relatives or firms that employ any of them." (*Time*, 11/26/06)

Why is the top Democrat appropriator in charge of reform? Putting David Obey and Robert Byrd in charge of earmark reform is as disturbing as allowing a Member under FBI investigation to appropriate the FBI's budget.

- "...Pelosi has tapped Wisconsin's David Obey, a 37-year veteran of the House who is the top Democratic appropriator, with drafting the actual earmark reforms, a troubling choice given that Obey was responsible for approximately 40% of the past earmarks under an informal system established by both parties, according to Scott Lilly, Obey's former chief of staff." (*Time*, 11/26/06)